

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Today, Congressmen Jim Costa (D-Fresno) and Dennis Cardoza (D-Merced) announced that Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar will arrive in the San Joaquin Valley on Sunday, June 28th, 2009. Salazar will be joined by Deputy Secretary David Hayes and Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Mike Connor

The San Joaquin Valley has been especially hard hit by drought in the past few years. Additionally, water deliveries to Valley farmers from the San Joaquin Delta have been curtailed by regulators who have placed an undue amount of blame on famers for declines in fish populations to the north.

Since President Obama took office in January, Congressmen Cardoza and Costa have requested that the incoming Interior Secretary come to the San Joaquin Valley.

“This trip by Secretary Salazar is a result of weekly talks with our offices and the Department of Interior regarding the drought and the impact on our Valley. The Secretary knows about the hundreds thousands of acres of fallowed fields, the high unemployment and the possibility of a fourth year of drought,” said Costa. “The lack of water has rippled into every facet of our economy. We now have those who normally sow and reap our nation’s food, standing in food lines to feed their own families. As part of this important visit, I will be explaining to the Secretary the need for both short and long term water solutions in California, which include repairing the Delta, improving water supply and quality, and environmental restoration.”

“I am grateful for Secretary Salazar’s visit to the Valley,” said Congressman Dennis Cardoza. “The Central Valley simply cannot continue down its current path. This regulatory drought is destroying our farmers, our families and our local economy. Further, we are facing a genuine risk of having to import additional food to supply our nation. I look forward to providing Secretary Salazar with as much insight as possible about the extreme hardship in our agricultural community and look forward to the assistance that he is capable of providing.”

Further details of the Secretary’s visit will be announced in the coming days.